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THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER



THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER
AND OTHER FAIRY POEMS

Illustrated by
BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF



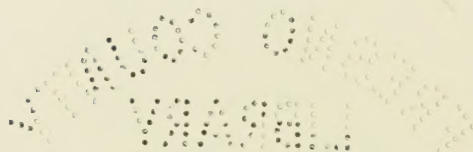
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER	8
<i>By William Allingham</i>	
THE FAIRIES	30
<i>By William Allingham</i>	
SLEEPYHEAD	52
<i>By Walter de la Mare</i>	
BERRIES	64
<i>By Walter de la Mare</i>	
THE FORSAKEN MERMAN	81
<i>By Matthew Arnold</i>	

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THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER

Little Cowboy, what have you heard,
Up on the lonely rath's green
mound?
Only the plaintive yellow bird
Sighing in sultry fields around,
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee!—
Only the grasshopper and the bee?—



“Tip-tap, rip-rap,
Tick-a-tack-too!
Scarlet leather, sewn together,
This will make a shoe.
Left, right, pull it tight;
Summer days are warm;
Underground in winter,
Laughing at the storm!”

Lay your ear close to the hill.
Do you not catch the tiny clamour,
Busy click of elfin hammer,
Voice of the Lepracaun singing
shrill
As he merrily plies his trade?
He's a span
And a quarter in height.

Get him in sight, hold him tight,
And you're a made
Man!

You watch your cattle the summer day,
Sup on potatoes, sleep in the hay;
How would you like to roll in your
carriage,
Look for a duchess's daughter in
marriage?





Seize the Shoemaker—then you may!

“Big boots a-hunting,
Sandals in the hall,
White for a wedding-feast,
Pink for a ball.

This way, that way,
So we make a shoe;
Getting rich every stitch,
Tick-tack-too!"

Nine-and-ninety treasure-crocks
This keen miser-fairy hath,
Hid in mountains, woods and rocks,
Ruin and round-tow'r, cave and rath,
And where the cormorants build;

From time of old
Guarded by him;
Each of them fill'd
Full to the brim
With gold!



I caught him at work one day, myself,
In the castle-ditch, where foxglove
grows,—
A wrinkled, wizen'd, and bearded Elf,
Spectacles stuck on his pointed nose,
Silver buckles to his hose,
Leather apron—shoe in his lap—

“Rip-rap, tip-tap,
Tack-tack-too!
 (A grasshopper on my cap!
 Away the moth flew!)
Buskins for a fairy prince,
 Brogues for his son,—
Pay me well, pay me well,
 When the job is done!”

The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt.
I stared at him; he stared at me;
 'Servant, Sir!' 'Humph!' says he,
 And pull'd a snuff-box out.
He took a long pinch, look'd better
 pleased,
 The queer little Lepracaun;
Offer'd the box with a whimsical
 grace,—

Pouf! he flung the dust in my face,
And, while I sneezed,
Was gone!

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.





THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;

Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;



Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.



With a bridge of white mist
Columbkil he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;

Or going up with music
On cold starry nights
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.



They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.

They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.

If any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.



Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.



SLEEPYHEAD

As I lay awake in the white moonlight,
I heard a faint singing in the wood,



“Out of bed,
Sleepyhead,
Put your white foot, now;
Here are we
Beneath the tree
Singing round the root now.”

I looked out of window, in the white
moonlight,
The leaves were like snow in the wood—
“Come away,
Child, and play
Light with the gnomies;

In a mound,
Green and round,
That's where their home is.

“Honey sweet,
Curds to eat,
Cream and frumenty,
Shells and beads,
Poppy seeds,
You shall have plenty.”



But, as soon as I stooped in the dim
moonlight
To put on my stocking and my shoe,
The sweet shrill singing echoed faintly
away,
And the grey of the morning peeped
through,
And instead of the gnomies there came
a red robin
To sing of the buttercups and dew.

WALTER DE LA MARE.



BERRIES

There was an old woman
Went blackberry picking
Along the hedges
From Weep to Wicking.
Half a pottle—
No more had she got,
When out steps a Fairy
From her green grot;

And says, "Well, Jill,
Would 'ee pick 'ee mo?"
And Jill, she curtseys,
And looks just so.
"Be off," says the Fairy,
"As quick as you can,
Over the meadows
To the little green lane,

That dips to the hayfields
Of Farmer Grimes:
I've berried those hedges
A score of times;
Bushel on bushel
I'll promise 'ee, Jill,
This side of supper
If 'ee pick with a will."



She glints very bright,
And speaks her fair;
Then lo, and behold!
She has faded in air.

Be sure old Goodie
She trots betimes
Over the meadows
To Farmer Grimes.
And never was queen
With jewellery rich
As those same hedges
From twig to ditch;

Like Dutchmen's coffers,
Fruit, thorn, and flower—
They shone like William
And Mary's bower.
And be sure old Goodie
Went back to Weep,
So tired with her basket
She scarce could creep.

When she comes in the dusk
To her cottage door,
There's Towser wagging
As never before,
To see his Missus
So glad to be
Come from her fruit-picking
Back to he.



As soon as next morning
Dawn was grey,
The pot on the hob
Was simmering away;
And all in a stew
And a hugger-mugger
Towser and Jill
A-boiling of sugar,

And the dark clear fruit
That from Faërie came,
For syrup and jelly
And blackberry jam.

Twelve jolly gallipots
Jill put by;

And one little teeny one,
One inch high;
And that she's hidden
A good thumb deep,
Half way over
From Wicking to Weep.

WALTER DE LA MARE.



THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go.—
Call once yet!



In a voice that she will know:
 “Margaret! Margaret!”
Children’s voices should be dear.
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear;
Children’s voices, wild with pain,—
 Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
 This way, this way!
“Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret.”
 Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy
shore;
Then come down!
She will not come, though you call all
day;
Come away, come away!
Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?

In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the
 stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture ground;

Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?



When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of
the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee,

She comb'd its bright hair, and she
tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off
bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the
clear green sea;

She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk
pray
In the little grey church on the shore
today.
'Twill be Easter time in the world,—
ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here
with thee."

I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the
waves:

Say thy prayer, and come back to the
kind sea-caves!"

She smiled, she went up through the surf
in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
“The sea grows stormy, the little ones
moan;
Long prayers,” I said, “in the world
they say;
Come!” I said, and we rose through the
surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-
wall’d town,

Through the narrow paved streets, where
all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy
hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk
at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing
airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones
worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the
small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
“Margaret, hist! come quick, we are
here!
Dear heart,” I said, “we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones
moan.”

But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the
door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!

358278



She sits at her wheel in the humming
town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child
with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy
well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"

And so she sings her fill,
Sings most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks
at the sand,

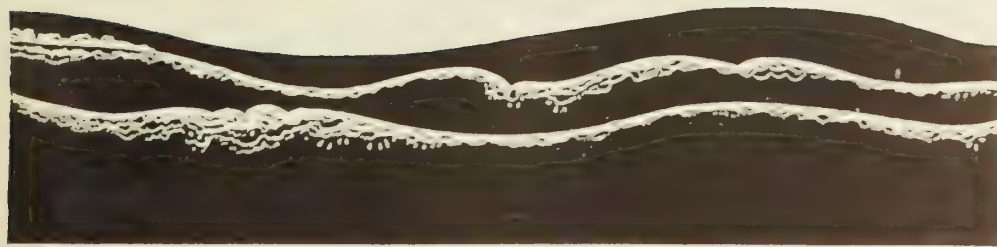
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare,
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,

A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little
Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.



Come away, away, children;
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.



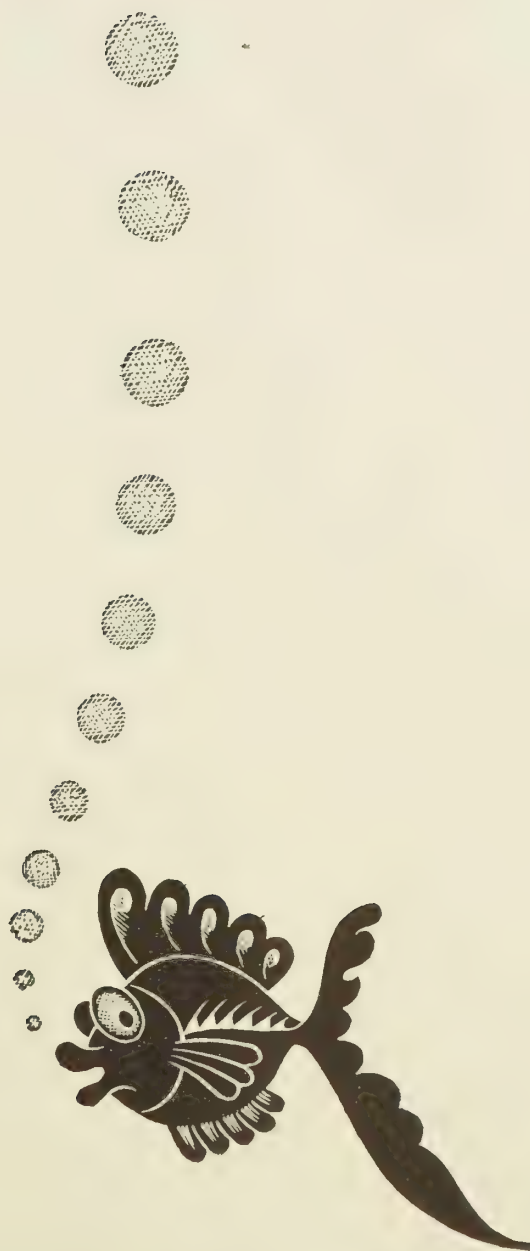


We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;

Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of high seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.



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The fairy shoemaker, and 52
other fairy poems.

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